

Patent Application

of

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for

5 TITLE: Board Game for Teaching a Foreign Language

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS: Not Applicable

FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH: Not Applicable

SEQUENCE LISTING OR PROGRAM: Not Applicable

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TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to a board game and more particularly to a board game that is intended to teach and familiarize foreign languages to people of varying
15 ages and skill levels.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Educational board games are well known in the prior art and in particular board games
20 which are designed and developed to teach or improve a person's vocabulary or language skills. These games are typically played in a single language which is generally the national language or most commonly spoken language in a given country or geographical region.

As overseas travel and communication increases together with globalization a persons

need to be conversant in more than one language has greatly increased. For example, schools in the southwest United States often teach both Spanish and English to their students and it is common for students in the United States school system to be required to take some type of foreign language class. In Australia legislation has been ratified whereby schools must
5 include the learning of a second language as a compulsory part of the student syllabus.

The present invention requires the use of two languages and is played in a bilingual mode. Some portions of game play require a player only to identify an image or use it in a sentence or question while other portions of game play require a translation of an image or word from a first language to a second, foreign language. In this respect, the language game
10 according to the present invention substantially departs from the conventional concepts and designs of the prior art, and in doing so provides an apparatus primarily developed for the purpose of teaching foreign languages.

Therefore, it can be appreciated that there exists a continuing need for a new and improved language game, which can be used to teach foreign languages. In this regard, the
15 present invention substantially fulfills this need.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention, in its preferred embodiment, consists of a board game that is
20 designed to teach or improve a person's vocabulary or language skills in a foreign language, also referred to as the target language. Questions are removable or exchangeable in order to keep pace with a player's progress or level of understanding. Students move around a game board by rolling a die and every time a student lands on a question space, the student must

answer the question. The first person back to the finish wins. The winner must land of the finish exactly.

Depending on the level of the player, the game is designed to be flexible enough for players to answer the question relative to their skill level. Questions are stored on either a removable disk or through the use of playing cards. In this way one may interchange the disks or cards for other question disks or cards to relate the game more to a particular topic. Currently there are over sixty categories of questions, ranging from sports to animals, fruits, shops, clothing etc.

In another embodiment the game may include challenge disks and questions that require the student to come up with a translation from a first language to a second, foreign language.

In yet another embodiment of the game here may also be a penalty circle, with a spinner attached. Every time students land on the "FATE" space they have to spin the spinner and face whatever penalty the spinner lands on. The game will have different versions and themes though the game concept would remain the same i.e. Race around America, King of the world challenge, etc. In all embodiments, the first person to the finish wins and the winner must land of the finish exactly. .

The device according to the present invention departs from the conventional concepts and designs of the prior art, and in so doing provides a method of learning a foreign language that is more interesting to the user while providing a broad range of topics and skill levels. The present invention addresses the shortcomings in the prior art with respect to its approach to teaching and reinforcing the learning of a new language and the ease of flexibility of the game to change various topics and adjust skill level as the user desires.

These together with other objects of the invention, along with the various features of novelty, which characterize the invention, are pointed out with particularity in the claims annexed to and forming a part of this disclosure. For a better understanding of the invention, its operating advantages and the specific objects attained by its uses, reference should be
5 made to the accompanying drawings and descriptive matter in which there are illustrated preferred embodiments of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- 10 Fig. 1 illustrates the basic game board of the present invention;
Fig. 2 illustrates an alternative embodiment of the game board;
Fig. 3 illustrates a typical question disk;
Fig. 4 illustrates a questions disk for the topic “number” in another embodiment of the game;
Fig. 5 illustrates a preferred embodiment of the game board of the present invention;
15 Figs. 6(a-d) illustrate sample cards used in the game play of the present invention.
Fig. 7 illustrates typical phrase questions;
Figs. 8(a-d) illustrate sample questions and various difficulty levels for a range of topics;
Figs. 9(a-d) illustrate sample question disk questions and topics for various skill levels.

20 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

In the following detailed description of the invention of exemplary embodiments of the invention, reference is made to the accompanying drawings (where like numbers represent

like elements), which form a part hereof, and in which is shown by way of illustration specific exemplary embodiments in which the invention may be practiced. These embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention, but other embodiments may be utilized and logical, mechanical, electrical, and other changes may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention. The following detailed description is therefore, not to be taken in a limiting sense, and the scope of the present invention is defined only by the appended claims.

In the following description, numerous specific details are set forth to provide a thorough understanding of the invention. However, it is understood that the invention may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well-known structures and techniques known to one of ordinary skill in the art have not been shown in detail in order not to obscure the invention.

Referring to the figures, it is possible to see the various major elements constituting the apparatus of the present invention. The invention is a board game with several additional elements that operate together in such a manner to educate the players regarding a variety of features related to language learning. The major elements consist of a game board, questions disks, playing cards, various player pieces, and also a die.

FIG. 1 illustrates the basic game board of the present invention. The invention, in its preferred embodiment, consists of a game board (100) that is designed to teach or improve a person's vocabulary or language skills in a foreign language. The focus of the present invention is the game board (100), which is subdivided into a plurality of adjacent spaces (110 & 111) which defining a track (112) with a starting point (106) and a finishing point (107). The track (112), in its progression from start (106) to finish (107) intersects with a plurality of

locations where the adjacent spaces (110 & 111) create circular areas (101-105) with the appearance of zones (108-109) radially extending around the center (113).

These circular areas (101-105) are covered with removable questions disks that have the same appearance with respect to the plurality of adjacent spaces (110 & 111) arranged to form a circular area (101-105) giving the appearance of radially extending zones around a center (113). Questions are stored on removable disks. This way one may interchange the disks for other question disks to relate the game more to a particular topic. For example if a player wants to learn fruits, and then one would place in a question disk pertaining to fruits (115). When a player lands on the space containing a picture of an apple (116), the player would respond in one of the following ways:

- A. Pronounce what is the representative image of the particular space they landed upon in the desired foreign language;
- B. use the representative image of the particular space they landed upon in a sentence utilizing the desired foreign language;
- C. make a question out of the image of the particular space they landed upon and ask it to another student.

Question disks (114-115) are removable or exchangeable in order to keep pace with a player's progress or level of understanding. Students move around a game board and every time a student lands on a question space (116), the student must answer a question.

Depending on the level of the player, the game is designed to be flexible enough for players to answer the question relative to their skill level.

There are over sixty categories of questions, ranging from sports to animals, fruits, shops, clothing etc. Then there are also challenge disks and questions that require the student

to come up with a translation from a first language to a second, foreign language. The first person back to the finish (107) wins. The winner must land of the finish exactly.

In another embodiment there may be a penalty circle (120), with a spinner attached. Every time students land on a "FATE" space they have to spin the spinner (201) and face
5 whatever penalty the spinner lands on.

Fig. 2 illustrates another embodiment of the game board illustrating that the track (207), in its progression from a second start (205) and finish (206) may intersect with any number of a plurality of locations where questions disks may be placed (202-204) and take on a multitude of track progressions to do so arranged in any manner desired. The board may
10 also incorporate a spinner (201) to facilitate player movement.

Fig. 3 illustrates a typical question disk (300) of the present invention. A plurality of adjacent spaces (303-306) are arranged to form a circular area (300) giving the appearance of radially extending zones (302-306) around a center (308) which may designate the name of the questions topics with words or images. The questions disk has a an enter space (302) and
15 an exit space (303) which match the game board track layout and allow players to progress from a start to a finish. The questions disk is marked in such a manner to clearly indicate a division between the enter space (302) and exit space (303), is the embodiment illustrated in Fig. 3, a stronger or thicker radial line (301) used to define adjacent sides of the enter space (302) and exit spaces (303) is incorporated to enable a player to properly position the question
20 disk on the game board (100).

Fig. 4 represents yet another embodiment of the question disk that may be used with the present invention. The numbers question disk (400) contains a stronger or thicker radial line (401) used to define adjacent sides of the enter space (402) and exit spaces (403) enabling

a player to properly position the question disk on the game board (100) as previously discussed. In this embodiment of the question disk associated with the present invention, the addition of "FATE" spaces (404 & 405) are illustrated. Every time students land on the "FATE" space they have to spin the spinner and face whatever penalty the spinner lands on.

5 Fig 5. illustrates a preferred embodiment of the present invention incorporating question circles. In the preferred embodiment, the game has a start space (501) and a finish space (505) connected by a plurality of adjacent squares combine to product a path or track (507) from start (501) to finish (505). Players move around the board after rolling a die. When players stop on a space within a question circle (502-504) they are required to use
10 English (or the specific target language) to answer the question. Questions can be very simple to very advanced. If a player lands on a "FATE" space they must spin the spinner (506) and proceed as directed by the spin result.

 Figs. 6a-6b illustrate some of the various embodiments of question cards that might be used in the present invention. Fig. 6a illustrates a Survival card that requires players, on a
15 first side (601), to translate the set phrase into the target language to make a correct answer, found on a second side (605). When a player lands of a survival square they will be faced with answering either a survival phrase or survival expression question. A survival phrase would be illustrated by the player saying aloud "What's your name?" while a survival expression would be illustrated by the player saying aloud "good morning." Expression
20 questions can either require the player to translate the meaning from their native language into a target language or from the target language to the their native language.

 Fig. 6b illustrates a Challenge card. The challenge card requires a player, on a first side (602), to translate and answer a question, with the appropriate answer found on a second

side (606). There can be several levels of difficulty such as: a beginner may give an example of the word shown, i.e. give an example of the word Fruit, an appropriate answer would be apple, to advanced an intermediate level player might be asked to give the number of words as instructed by the teacher, while an advanced player may be asked to give the specified

5 number of words and then make it into a question form.

While figures 6a and 6b illustrate two possible playing cards used in the present invention it should be appreciated that questions cards can come in many different equivalent forms such as: picture cards where a beginners would simply say out the word in English, junior level player would use the word in a statement form i.e. I like “blank”, and intermediate
10 through advance level players would use the word and put in a question form and ask that of another student i.e. Do you like “blank”?

In yet another embodiment of the present invention the game board can contain phrase specific spaces. If players are given the skeletal of the structure to be used i.e. do you “blank”, players would have to make a question utilizing the structure. Now referring to Fig.
15 7, a listing of typical phrase circle questions (700) for covering a variety of topics (701-709) is provided. These questions require students to use the particular target phrase. Students are required to say the phrase, or ask the question to someone else.

In yet another embodiment of the present invention the game board can contain expression spaces. On these spaces students are required to translate the meaning from their
20 native language into the target language. Figures 8a illustrates a listing of typical expression circle questions (800) for covering a variety of topics and skill levels (801-803).

In yet another embodiment of the present invention the game board can contain talk about spaces. These spaces are designed to enhance the students thinking ability. Given a

word, students have to think of a suitable sentence. For example, beginners can use statements, intermediate through advance level players would create a question and ask this to another person, who, in turn, provides an answer. Figures 8b illustrates a listing of typical talk about circle questions (804) for covering a variety of topics and skill levels (805-807).

5 In yet another embodiment of the present invention the game board can contain vocab and phrase challenge question spaces. If a player lands on a vocab challenge space they are required to give an example of the word given. The vocab challenge space is marked with a certain “vocab category” word, for example sport, food, drink, animal or a set category such as months of the year, days of the week, number 1-10, etc. Figure 8c illustrates a listing of
10 vocab challenge questions (808) for covering a variety of topics and skill levels (809-811). For categories such as sport, food, or drink the player has to give a certain number of words relating to that topic as instructed by the teacher or agreed upon by the players before starting the game. For example, the instructor requires three words, a participant lands on sport, and correctly answers basketball, baseball, and tennis. For months of the year, students would say
15 out loud the months of the year. To compensate for various skill levels more or less words can be required for a correct answer.

If a player lands on a phrase challenge space they are require the student to come up with their own sentence using the sentence structure provided. Figures 8d illustrates a listing of vocab challenge questions (812) for covering a single topic and skill level (813).

20 Figs. 9a-9d illustrate a listing of topic questions (900) covering a single skill level (925). Each topic contains ten questions that can be used on a questions disk as illustrated in Fig. 4. Fig. 4 shows how the topic “Numbers” (901) could be used to create a questions disk featuring each number and two additional spaces “Fate” spaces (404 & 405). In another

embodiment, not shown, a topic could consist of the same number or less than the number of available disk spaces.

Figs. 9a-9d illustrate a range of twenty topics (901-920) and four verb sets (921-924) of the current preferred embodiment of the board game of the present invention although the list is not meant to be restrictive of complete and it would be appreciated by one of ordinary skill in the art that any number of topics can be used.

In yet another embodiment of the present invention the game board can contain a picture card space with a specific phrase. If a player lands on a picture card with a specific phrase then the player would utilize the phrase together with the picture.

In yet another embodiment of the game, such as utilizing the game in a classroom session, individual players can be replaced with teams or groups. The game would be played against others groups in the class. Basically the winner would be deemed the first group that was able to get the whole team to the finish line first.

It is appreciated that the optimum dimensional relationships for the parts of the invention, to include variation in size, materials, shape, form, function, and manner of operation, assembly and use, are deemed readily apparent and obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, and all equivalent relationships to those illustrated in the drawings and described in the above description are intended to be encompassed by the present invention.

In addition, other areas of art may benefit from this method and adjustments to the design are anticipated. Thus, the scope of the invention should be determined by the appended claims and their legal equivalents, rather than by the examples given.